

N A R R A T I V E
O F A
S H I P W R E C K
O N T H E
ISLAND OF CAPE BRETON,
IN A VOYAGE FROM QUEBEC 1780.

By S. W. PRENTIES,
Ensign of the 84th Regiment of Foot.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:
Printed for T. ROBERTSON, (Successor to Mr.
MILLAN) opposite the *Admiralty*.
M,DCC,LXXXIII.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IF a genuine and authentic narrative of events, which may be justly reckoned extraordinary, though they come not up to the standard of adventures, be thought equally interesting with a fictitious Novel, or an improbable Romance, no apology will be required for the present publication. Indeed, to apologize for so innocent and even laudable an attempt as that to entertain the Public, by any species of composition, sanctified as it is by custom, should always be thought superfluous; and though that end should not be attained by the following narration, yet at least it may be interesting to professional men, who are continually exposed to the same disasters. Like the draughts of rocks and quicksands in their charts, it may serve to direct them how to avoid the danger, or, when once involved in it, how to conduct themselves through it.

In the relating of our transactions at sea, all technical terms have been avoided as far as possible; yet on some occasions they could not be wholly dispensed with. The frequent use of egotism will be excused by those who consider its necessity, from the nature of the subject.

Though in narratives of this kind there are sometimes considerable embellishments and exaggerations, yet the authenticity of the facts here related, cannot so reasonably be called in question, as those of an anonymous production: for it will not appear probable to any thinking person, that I should put my name to a relation either exceeding or short of the truth, when it is considered, that there are several persons living, who would be ready to contradict my assertions.

S. W. PRENTIES.

THE
EDITOR'S PREFACE
TO
THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS narrative was not originally intended for the public eye, but was drawn up hastily by the Author, in order to lay a representation of his case before Government, and to solicit some reparation for the losses he had sustained in his Majesty's service. Being ordered out in the Spring, to his regiment in Canada, he revised the copy, and left some emendations with the Editor, in case it should be thought deserving of a second impression. The very favourable reception the book met with, did not leave the Editor a doubt of republishing it.

The Author at the same time gave it in charge to the Editor, to acknowledge his
gratitude

vi P R E F A C E.

gratitude to the late Ministry ; who, on the representation of his extraordinary sufferings and losses, in a great measure made good the latter, after the truth of the relation had been certified by Lord Dalrymple, aide-de-camp to Sir Henry Clinton, in America, at the time Mr. Prenties delivered his dispatches. He desired that his thanks should be in a particular manner signified to Mr. Fisher, who was then Under Secretary for the American department; a gentleman whose humanity and politeness, whilst in office, made him respected by every one who had any transactions with him.

Critics must not judge of this as a literary work. The Author does not aspire to the character of a fine writer. It is merely intended as a simple narrative of *facts*, and is not calculated to amuse, or astonish, at the expence of the Reader's judgment and the Author's veracity.

It has been objected by some, that Mr. Prenties has not given the name of the Master. Now this, one may clearly perceive,

P R E F A C E. vii

ceive, he has declined through delicacy; as impartiality and a regard to truth made it necessary for him to relate certain particulars not so much to the matter's credit. This man is now in London, and has been in England since the first publication of the narrative. If the facts related in it be not authentic, let him stand forth, and publicly disavow them.

The Author will, no doubt, be pleased to find, that he has furnished an useful hint to Government; the Pandora frigate having been ordered last Summer into the gut of Canso, where she captured several American privateers.

Extract

Extract from the MONTHLY REVIEW
for August, 1782.

“ The resources to avoid cold, and
“ sustain life, amidst this scene of wretch-
“ edness, [*the scene described in this little*
“ *volume*] almost realize the fictions of De
“ Foe, in his *Robinson Crusoe*; and pro-
“ bably exceed the contrivances of Alex-
“ ander Selkirk, the genuine hero of that
“ admired story. The present narrative
“ is very interesting. It is related with
“ moderation and good sense. The Au-
“ thor hath given us a striking example
“ of unshaken fortitude ; and, at the same
“ time, hath displayed a fertility of inven-
“ tion, more particularly conspicuous in
“ the most desperate situations.”

N A R

NARRATIVE

OF

A SHIPWRECK, &c.

ON the 17th of November 1780, I embarked on board the St. Lawrence brigantine, then lying in the basin of Quebec, and bound to New York, being charged with dispatches from General Haldimand, commander in chief in that province, to Sir Henry Clinton. The same day, on receiving our sailing orders, we weighed anchor, and dropped down to the harbour called Patrick's Hole, in the island of Orleans, in company with a schooner bound to the same port, on board of which was an Ensign Drummond, of the 44th regiment, with duplicates of General Haldimand's dispatches. In this place we were detained six days by a contrary wind; at the expiration

piration of which time the frost had set in with prodigious severity, and the ice was forming fast in all parts of the river. Had the wind continued unfair for a few days longer, we should have been entirely blocked up by it, and had happily escaped the calamities which afterwards befell us.

On the 24th, the wind being fair, we got under weigh, and proceeded down the river St. Lawrence, as far as the Brandy Pots, islands so called, about forty leagues from Quebec. At this place the wind veered about to the north-east, which obliged us again to anchor. The weather continued intensely cold; and the vessel, being leaky, made so much water as to render it necessary to keep one pump continually going. A change of wind soon after enabled us to proceed on our voyage, and to make the island of Anticosti, which is at the mouth of the river St. Lawrence; when the wind coming round again to the eastward, we were obliged to beat off and on between this island and Cape Roziere for four days; our vessel
at

at the same time increasing her leaks to such a degree, that we were under the necessity of rigging the other pump, and of keeping them both constantly at work. Being now in a higher latitude, the severity of the cold had increased in proportion, and the ice began to form so fast about the ship as to alarm us exceedingly, lest we should be entirely surrounded by it; which we only prevented by cutting and breaking vast quantities from her sides. To this task, with that of keeping the pumps at work, the crew, together with the passengers, were scarcely equal, only nineteen persons being on board, of whom six were passengers, and the remainder very indifferent seamen. As for the master, from whom in the present emergency we might have expected some degree of exertion, instead of attending to his duty and the preservation of his ship, he remained continually in a state of intoxication in his cabin.

On the 29th the wind came round to the north-west, and we proceeded down the gulf of St. Lawrence, with two feet

water in the ship's hold. The wind kept gradually increasing till the 1st of December, when it blew a perfect gale from the north-west quarter; and the ship's crew being now almost overcome with cold and fatigue, seeing no prospect of gaining upon the leak, the water having already increased to four feet in the hold, nor a possibility of making any port, they came to the resolution of working no longer at the pumps; which was unanimously agreed to by all the foremast men. They accordingly left off working, and declared themselves quite indifferent about their fate, preferring the alternative of going to the bottom together with the vessel, to that of suffering such severe and incessant labour in so desperate a situation. Their fatigues, it must be confessed, from the 17th of November had been excessive; and though hope might still remain, yet our present circumstances were such as to exclude all probability at least of saving the vessel. However, by the force of persuasion and promises, together with the timely distribution of a pint of wine per man, which I had fortunately

nately brought on board, they were diverted from this desperate resolution, but with great reluctance, saying, with some truth, as we afterwards experienced, and with more than they themselves were aware of, that whether the vessel filled or not was a matter of no consequence. This delay, though not exceeding a quarter of an hour, had increased the depth of water another foot; but the men added to their exertions, being encouraged by the wine, which was issued to them every half-hour, succeeded so far as to reduce the water in the space of two hours to less than three feet. The captain still remained in his cabin.

During the 2d and 3d of December the gale seemed to increase rather than diminish. The ice formed so thick on the ship's sides, as to impede her way very much through the water; which furnished us with a new labour, that of cutting it off, as fast as it formed, with saws and axes. The leak continued to gain ground. The schooner that was in company, far from being able to afford us any assistance,

ance, was in as leaky a condition as our own vessel; having struck upon some rocks at the island of Coudres, through the ignorance or neglect of her pilot. A heavy snow beginning to fall, it was with the utmost difficulty we could get sight of each other, though at no great distance, and, in order not to part company, fired a gun every half-hour. The schooner at length made no answer to our guns, whence we concluded she had foundered; nor were we wrong in our supposition. There were sixteen persons on board, every one of whom perished.

On the following day the gale increased prodigiously, and the sea began to run high, with a heavy fall of snow, so as to prevent our seeing twenty yards a-head of the vessel. The men being excessively fatigued, the water had risen to its usual quantity of between four and five feet. The mate, whom I have not yet taken notice of, an intelligent young man, and well acquainted with his profession, judged, from the distance we had run, that we could not now be far from the Magdalen Islands,

Islands, which lie about midway in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. These islands are nothing more than a cluster of rocks, some appearing above, and others hidden under the water, and have been fatal to many vessels. Seamen wish often to make them in fine weather, as they serve to take a new departure from; but in foggy or blowing weather they as studiously avoid them. The mate's conjecture was but too well founded; for in less than two hours we heard the sea breaking upon the rocks, and soon after discovered the principal island, called the Deadman, close under our lee, the point of which it was with the greatest difficulty that we weathered. Having happily cleared the main island, we were still far from thinking ourselves secure; for being unable, on account of the heavy fall of snow, to see many yards a-head of the vessel, and being in the midst of the small islands, there appeared very little probability that we should pass clear of them all in the same manner. Not being able to distinguish any one in time to avoid it, we were obliged to leave the vessel to the direction of Providence,

and

and fortunately, I might say almost miraculously, ran through them all without damage. The anxiety and perturbation of mind that the crew and passengers were in, while in the midst of these rocks, may be easily conceived: and now that the danger was over, it turned out to be a fortunate occurrence for us; for, by this time, the sailors being ready to sink under the accumulated distresses of cold and fatigue, and depressed by the little hopes they had of saving the vessel, had nearly determined a second time to quit the pumps, and leave the vessel to her fate; when acquiring fresh spirits from the danger we had escaped, and, as the vulgar are generally inclined to superstition, attributing what was perhaps accident alone to the immediate interposition of Providence, they agreed to continue their efforts a little longer; towards which they were likewise not a little encouraged by the wine which I distributed to them occasionally.

During the night the gale continuing, and the sea running very high, we were
 appre-

apprehensive of being what seamen call
 pooped, or having the stern or poop of
 the vessel beaten in by the waves; which
 happened in fact as we apprehended: for
 about five in the morning of the 5th, a
 large wave broke on the ship's quarter,
 which stove in our dead lights, filled the
 cabin, and washed the master out of his
 bed, where he had remained ever since
 the commencement of the gale. This ac-
 cident was attended with worse conse-
 quences than we at first imagined; for
 we soon discovered, from the increase of
 the leaks, that the stern-post had been
 started by the impulse of the sea. Having
 nothing in the after-hold, no other resource
 was left but that of attempting to stop
 the leaks with beef, which we cut into
 small pieces for that purpose: but this
 expedient we soon found ineffectual, and
 the water continued to gain on us faster
 than ever. The sailors finding all their
 labours fruitless, and the leak, which was
 constantly increasing before, now rendered
 by our late misfortune entirely irreparable,
 abandoned themselves totally to despair,
 and again refused to work at the pumps

C

any

any longer. They had not however long remained inactive before we contrived once more to persuade them, to make another effort to clear the vessel ; when, to our great surprise and consternation, we found the pumps so hard frozen that it was impossible to move them.

All endeavours now to keep the ship clear were ineffectual, so that in a very short time she filled to the water's edge. Having no longer, as we imagined, the smallest foundation for hope, we resigned ourselves with as much fortitude as possible to our fate, which we expected every moment to be that of going to the bottom. Notwithstanding, when the vessel was quite full, we observed she was very little deeper in the water than before; and then recollecting a circumstance, which the trouble and confusion we had been in had almost obliterated, namely, that we had a quantity of lumber on board, we immediately accounted for the phenomenon of her not sinking beyond a certain depth in the water, and began to recall hopes of saving our lives at least, if we
could

could but prevent her from oversetting till we could make the island of St. John's, or some other island in the gulph. Having no guns on deck, and not much lumber, to render the ship top-heavy, we contrived to prevent her from oversetting, by steering directly before the wind; though not without some difficulty, as, from the little way she made through the water, the waves frequently washed clear over the decks. Besides taking care to keep the vessel steady, we used every precaution to secure our boat from being washed overboard, the loss of which would in our present circumstances be a dreadful misfortune. The cabin, being raised above the level of the main deck, was tolerably clear of water, and afforded us some little shelter from the severity of the weather. Thither we retired, leaving only one man upon deck to govern the helm, who was fastened by a rope to prevent his being carried away by the waves, which at times made a free passage over us.

The gale still continued without remission, the snow falling so thick at the same
C. 2
time

time, as to prevent our seeing to the mast-head. We knew from the distance we had run, that we could not be far from land. The captain imagined from our course, during the night, and since the ship filled in the morning, that we must be near the island of St. John's, which lies between the Magdalen islands and the gut of Canso. This gave us hopes of saving our lives, in case we could run ashore on some sandy part of it, till they were dashed by the further information we had from the captain, that the north-east side of the island was nothing but a continued reef of rocks from one end to the other, and that there was but one harbour where ships could put in, which he recollected was on the opposite side of the island. In a few hours after, we observed the waves grew shorter and break higher, which is always found to be the case on approaching the shore; and likewise a number of gulls and ducks flying about, a further sign we could not be far distant from it.

We now concluded that we were about to run upon the rocks, which, the captain informed

informed us, skirted the north-east side of the island, and on approaching the land laboured under greater dread and apprehension, than amidst all the dangers we had before experienced, the idea of being cast upon those tremendous rocks being more terrifying than that of being buried, as our companions were, in the bosom of the ocean. The ship had still considerable way through the water, though full, and with no other sail set but a close-reefed fore-top-sail, which was the only one we could display; and the canvas being new, it had hitherto stood the gale. The captain proposed bringing the ship to, to keep her off the land; which I opposed, as well as the mate, urging the probability that we should overset her in the attempt; and that moreover, should we be able to effect it, she must after all drive ashore, as in her present state it was impossible to make any way to windward. Our opinion, however, was rejected, and an attempt was made to brace about the fore yard; but it was found impracticable, the ropes and blocks being covered with ice. We were therefore obliged to let it
 remain

remain as before ; and the water having suddenly changed its colour, we expected the ship to strike every instant. Small as our expectations were of saving our lives, I thought it incumbent on me to take every precaution to save the dispatches I was charged with, and therefore ordered my servant to open my trunks, and collect all the letters they contained, which I put into a handkerchief, and fastened about my waist. He at the same time offered me the money he found in them, to the amount of one hundred and eighty guineas, which I desired him to dispose of as he thought proper, thinking it in the present emergency rather an incumbrance than a matter worthy of preservation. My servant, however, thought otherwise, and took care to secure the cash, which was afterwards of more service to us, than at that time I could possibly have imagined.

The weather continued thick as usual till about one o'clock, when suddenly clearing up, we discovered the land, at about three leagues distance. This sight gave us no small satisfaction, taking it at first

first to be the island of St. John's, which being inhabited by several French and English families, we might have expected some assistance from them; but on a nearer view found, from the plans we had on board, that it had not the least appearance of that island, there being no such mountains and precipices laid down, as we discovered. On drawing nigher, we observed the sea break high, and have a very dismal appearance about three miles from the land. As it was necessary for us to pass through those breakers ere we could gain the shore, we expected that our fate would be determined there; but, contrary to our expectations, there was a considerable depth of water, so that we went over the reef without touching, though not without shipping many heavy seas, which, had not the vessel's timbers been strong, and her loading light, must infallibly have dashed her to pieces. The land now began to have a dreadful appearance, seeming at the distance we were off to be high and rocky; but on approaching within a mile of it, we had the pleasure of describing a fine sandy beach and a bold shore.

The

The sea ran high, but not to such a degree as on the reef we had already passed. As we advanced, the water continued to have a depth beyond our most sanguine wishes, so as to allow us to come within fifty or sixty yards of the beach before we struck. Now was the time for every man's apprehensions to be on the rack, as we might expect, on touching the shore, that the ship would go to pieces. At length she grounded with a violent concussion. On the first stroke the main-mast went out of the step, and on the second the fore-mast; but neither of them fell over the side, the deal boards in the hold being stowed so close together that the masts had no room to play below; at the same time the rudder was unshipped with such violence as to be near killing one of the sailors. As soon as the ship had grounded, the sea began to beat over her in every part, each wave lifting her four or five feet nearer the shore. In a short space of time the stern was beat-in by the sea; and then, having no shelter in the cabin, we were obliged to go upon deck, and hang by the shrouds, lest we should be washed overboard.

overboard. In this uncomfortable situation we remained till the vessel was beat so high by the waves, that we could venture to walk upon deck. We now perceived that the ship's keel was broken, which we imagined would occasion her to go to pieces: this however did not happen for the present; which I can only attribute to the boards in the hold being so intervoven with each other, and frozen together by the ice, as to give a degree of solidity to the vessel.

Our first care now was to get out the boat; which was not to be accomplished without difficulty, on account of the quantity of ice that was in and about it, and our reduction in number of effective hands by the intoxication of several of the crew, who had thought that the most effectual method of getting rid of the apprehensions they laboured under. Our vessel had, from the violence of the waves dashing against her, broached-to, with her broadside to the wind, so that she afforded some shelter for the boat to the leeward. Having with much labour cleared the boat of

D

ice,

ice, and prepared her for launching, I ordered some liquor to be distributed to those who were yet sober, and then asked, if any were willing to embark with me in the boat, and make the attempt to gain the shore. The sea running so high, that it appeared scarcely possible for the boat to live in it for a minute, very few were willing to make an experiment so full of risk; so that all who offered themselves were the mate and two sailors, together with my servant, and a boy who was a passenger on board. What gave us the greatest embarrassment in this undertaking was the surf which broke over us every moment, and the intenseness of the cold, which froze every drop of water immediately, so as to cover our cloaths with a sheet of ice. At length we got the boat into the water, and having thrown into it an axe and a saw, I leaped in, followed by my servant and the mate. The boy followed us, but not springing far enough, fell into the water: he did not however sink immediately; and we contrived to drag him into the boat, but not without difficulty; our fingers being so benumbed with
the

the cold, that we had scarcely the power of using them : and this accident was in the issue, by the chill it gave him, of fatal consequence to the unfortunate youth. The two sailors, who had agreed to go with us, next leaped into the boat ; and all the rest seemed ready, notwithstanding their former hesitation, to follow the example, when I found it necessary to shove her off from the ship's side ; for, being very small, she certainly would have sunk, had so many persons crowded in together. The ship was lying about forty yards from the shore ; but before we got half-way to it, we were overtaken by a wave that almost filled the boat, and the next drove us on the dry sand.

To find ourselves once more safe upon the land gave us no small satisfaction, though in so destitute a state : the joy at having escaped those dangers which so long had been the chief objects of our dread, made us for a few moments forget that we were snatched from them merely to be exposed to others more inevitable ; that we had escaped one species of death,

probably to undergo another more lingering and painful. What most affected us was the distress of our companions whom we had left on board, whose lamentations and cries for help we could hear very distinctly. But it was impossible for us, however anxious, to afford them any assistance. Our boat being beat high upon the sand could now be of no use, either to us or to them, while the sea was running to such a degree, that it was not in the power of a human being to relieve them.

The night was now approaching, and we had not long remained in this situation ere we found ourselves getting stiff with cold ; and the gale continuing as severe as ever, we were obliged to wade with extreme difficulty, up to our waists in snow, to the shelter of a thick wood about two hundred and fifty yards from the beach. This afforded some relief from the piercing North-west wind ; yet a fire was still wanting to warm our frozen limbs, and we had not wherewithal to kindle one. We had indeed taken the precaution to
put

put a tinder-box in the boat, but the water had rendered it totally useless. Freezing as we stood, there was nothing to be done, but to keep the blood in motion by exercise : I therefore recommended it to the men to move about, being better acquainted with the nature of cold climates, and that of frost, than any of my companions. My advice was strictly adhered to for about half an hour, when the young passenger, whom I have already mentioned, being overcome with the severity of the weather, threw himself down, in order to sleep ; for extreme cold always occasions a sleepy sensation that is not easily to be resisted. I used my utmost endeavours both by persuasion and force to rouse him, and make him stand on his legs, but all to no purpose ; so I was obliged to let him pursue his inclination. After walking about for half an hour longer, during which time I felt such a strong desire to sleep, that I should have lain down myself, had I not been aware of the fatal consequences attending it, I went to the place where the boy lay, and putting my hand on his face, and finding it quite cold, I observed

served to the mate, who was close by, that I believed he was dead. To which the youth answered immediately, that he was not yet dead, but would be so very shortly ; and requested I would write, if I survived, to his father at New York, and inform him of the circumstances of his son's misfortune. In about ten minutes we found that he had expired, and, as I imagined, without any pain whatever, at least without any acute sensation of it. These trivial matters would be unworthy of notice, but as they serve to shew the effect of intense cold on the human body, and to prove that freezing to death is not always attended with so much pain as is commonly supposed.

The death of the boy could not deter the rest of my fellow-sufferers from giving way to this drowsy sensation ; and three of them lay down in spite of my repeated exhortations to the contrary. Finding it impossible to keep them on their legs, I broke a branch, and desiring the mate to do the same, our employment during the remainder of the night was to prevent them
from

from sleeping, by beating them continually with the branches. This was an exercise useful to ourselves, at the same time that it preserved the lives of our companions. The day-light, which we looked for with such anxious expectation, at length appeared, when I desired the men to pull down their stockings, and let me examine their legs, as they observed that they had no feeling in them. As soon as I cast my eyes on them, I perceived very clearly that they were frozen at least half way up; and desired they would immediately rub them with snow, which they did for a considerable time, but to little purpose; for it was impossible to restore them to their feeling.

I then went with the mate down to the beach, to see if we could discover any traces of the ship, and our companions whom we had left on board, and to our great surprise and satisfaction found she had not yet gone to pieces, though the wind continued with unabated severity. My first study now was how to get them ashore, our own safety as well as theirs depending

depending on it. I was almost stiff with cold, but found feeling in every part, and was therefore certain I could not be frozen. What seemed greatly to facilitate the undertaking was, that the vessel had by this time beat much nigher the shore, so that the distance was but very small at low water. It was high flood when we arrived on the beach ; we were therefore obliged to wait till the tide was out, when we advised the people on board to fasten a rope to the jib-boom, by which they might swing themselves one by one towards the shore. They accordingly adopted this expedient, and by watching the motion of the sea, and seizing the opportunity of swinging themselves, as the waves retired, they all got safe on the land, except a carpenter, who was a passenger in the vessel. He did not think proper to venture in this manner, or was unable, having the night before made rather too free with the bottle. We were happy however to get so many of them on shore, every one of whom, a few hours before, we concluded must have perished.

The

The captain had fortunately, before he left the ship, put some materials for striking a light in his pocket. We therefore went to work in cutting wood, and gathering the branches that lay scattered upon the ground, of which we made a fire with all possible expedition, and were happy for some time in hovering about it, and warming our benumbed limbs. Considering the extreme cold we had endured for such a length of time, no luxury could be equal to that of the fire; but this gratification was, like many others, to several of my companions followed by the most excruciating pain, as soon as their frozen parts began to thaw. Several of those who had remained all night in the vessel, as well as those who came ashore with me in the boat, had been frozen in different parts of their members. The distress that was now painted in the faces of these unfortunate men, from the tortures they underwent, was beyond expression: this I knew would be the case before I heard them complain; but, as there was no remedy, did not think it necessary to give them any intimation of it.

E

When

When we came to examine into our numbers, I observed that a Capt. Green, a passenger, was missing ; and was informed that he had fallen a sleep on board the vessel, and had been frozen to death. We were rather uneasy about the man who still remained on board, yet had some hopes of saving his life, in case the ship did not go to pieces, at the return of low water : but it being too difficult to undertake in the night, we were under the necessity of waiting till the following day. This night we passed a little better than the last ; yet, notwithstanding we had a good fire, we found extreme inconveniency from the total want of covering, as well as from hunger, a new misery, that we had hitherto been unacquainted with. Besides which, the greatest part of our number were in the most wretched state imaginable, from the sores occasioned by the frost.

The next morning, as many of us as were able went to the beach to contrive some means to extricate the carpenter, whose voice we heard on board the vessel.

The

The sea still running with the same violence as before, we could not put out the boat to his assistance, and were therefore obliged to wait the return of low water, when we persuaded him to come on shore in the same manner as the others had done; but this he accomplished with much difficulty, being very weak, and frozen in different parts of his limbs. We still remained without any kind of provisions, and began to be reduced in strength for want of nourishment.

The 7th and 8th the gale continued as boisterous as ever; and in the night between the 8th and 9th of December the ship went to pieces from the stern to the main-mast, from the extreme violence with which the sea broke against her. By this part of her going to pieces, we obtained some provisions which washed on shore, viz. some pieces of salt beef, likewise some fresh meat that hung over the stern, and a quantity of onions that the captain had on board for sale. This relief was very seasonable, it being now the fourth day since we had eaten any kind of

E 2 provision

provision whatever. Having no utensils, we dressed our meat in the best manner we could, and made what we thought a most delicious repast. The sense of hunger being assuaged, we set to work in collecting all the provision we could find scattered upon the beach, being apprehensive that we should not soon get a supply from any other quarter. This done, our next care was to get ourselves under cover, and form some kind of shelter from the piercing blast. This task was not an easy one, so many of our company being unable to move, and of the remainder none but the mate and myself capable of any active exertion, being all more or less bitten by the frost; and our number reduced to seventeen, by the loss of two persons, as already mentioned. A quantity of deals had floated on shore from the wreck: of these we carried about two hundred and fifty into the wood, and by ten at night completed a kind of house, about twenty feet long and ten wide; which was constructed in the following manner. We cut two poles of the above-mentioned length, and, having no nails,
tied

tied them at a proper height on the outside
 of two trees, at the distance of twenty
 feet from each other: the interval between
 the poles, which was equal to the breadth
 of the trees, served for the smoke of our
 fire to go through; the fire itself being
 laid in an oblong position, extending it-
 self nearly the whole length of the house.
 Against these cross poles we placed boards
 with a slope of about sixty degrees to-
 wards the ground, which constituted the two
 principal sides. The two other sides were
 composed of boards placed perpendicular,
 the trunks of the trees being taken in, and
 forming part of each side: on one of these
 sides, that looked towards the south east,
 we left a vacancy for the entrance.

This business being over, we exa-
 mined the quantity of provisions we had
 collected, and had the satisfaction to find
 that we had in store between two and three
 hundred pounds of salt beef, and a con-
 siderable stock of onions. As to bread,
 we had none; for, when the vessel went
 to pieces, the casks were stove and the
 bread lost. Economy and good manage-
 ment

ment were now highly necessary to make our little stock last long as possible, it being quite uncertain when we could get any relief; and, in consequence, it was determined, that each man, whether sick or well, should be confined to a quarter of a pound of beef and four onions per day, as long as the latter should last. This wretched allowance, but just enough to keep a man from starving, was the utmost we thought it prudent to afford ourselves, lest we should be in an uninhabited country; for as yet we were rather uncertain on what coast we were cast away; though afterwards, on comparing circumstances, we concluded it must be on the island of Cape Breton.

On the 11th of December, being the sixth day after we landed, the gale abated, and gave us an opportunity to launch our boat, and get on board what remained of the vessel. Three of us accordingly embarked, having with much labour launched the boat, and cleared her of the sand and ice. As soon as we got on board the wreck, we went to work at opening the hatches,
and

and having but one axe, and the cables being frozen over them in a solid lump of ice, it took the whole day to accomplish it. The next day, the weather being still moderate, we went again on board, and having cleared away the remainder of the cable, we cut up part of the deck, in order to make room to get out two casks of onions, with a small barrel of beef, containing about one hundred and twenty pounds, and three barrels of apples, shipped by a Jewish merchant of Quebec. We likewise found a quarter-cask of potatoes, a bottle of oil, which proved very serviceable to the men's sores, another axe, a large iron pot, two camp kettles, and about twelve pounds of tallow candles. With much difficulty we got this great supply on shore. On the 13th we made it our business to get our provisions stowed away in a corner of the hut, when, on opening the apple casks, we found their contents, to our great surprise, converted into bottles of Canadian balsam, a more valuable commodity to be sure than apples, but what we could gladly have exchanged in our present situation for something more friendly
to

to the stomach than to the constitution. This disappointment, as may be supposed, extorted a few hearty good wishes towards the Jew; yet we found afterwards some use for his Canadian balsam, though somewhat different from what he intended it should be applied to.

The considerable supply we got from on board the wreck enabled us the next day to add four onions to our daily allowance. We went on board once more on the 14th, and cut as much of the sails as possible from the bowsprit, with part of which we covered our hut, and made it tolerably warm and comfortable, notwithstanding the severity of the weather. By this time the sores of the men who had been frost-bitten began to mortify, and caused their toes, fingers, and other parts of the limbs affected, to rot off, their anguish being at the same time almost intolerable. The carpenter, who came on shore after the others, had lost the greatest part of his feet, and on the 14th at night became delirious, in which unhappy state he continued, till death released him the following

following day from his miserable existence. We covered him with snow and branches of trees, having neither spade nor pickaxe to dig a grave for him; nor would it have been possible, if we had been provided with them, the ground being in this climate so hard frozen during the winter as to be almost impenetrable. Three days after, our second mate died in the same manner, having been delirious for some hours before he expired. We felt but very little concern at the death of our companions, either on their account or our own: for, in the first place, we considered it rather a happiness than a misfortune to be deprived of life in our present wretched situation, and, in the second, because there became the fewer mouths to consume our little stock of provisions: indeed, had not some paid the debt of nature, we should in the end have been reduced to the shocking necessity of killing and devouring one another. Though not yet reduced to this necessity, our condition was so miserable, that it seemed scarcely possible for any new distress to make a sensible addition to it. Besides the prospect

F

spect of perishing through want in that desolate place, and the pain arising from a perpetual sense of hunger and cold, the agony that the greatest part were in, from the sores occasioned by the frost, was beyond expression, while their groans were almost equally distressing to the remainder—but what affected me more than all our other miseries, was the quantity of vermin, proceeding from the men's sores, and continually increasing, which infested us in every part, and rendered us disgusting even to ourselves. Several, however, who had been but slightly frozen, recovered in a short time, with the loss of a few toes and fingers; no one having entirely escaped the frost but myself. On the 20th another sailor died, after having been, like the others, some time in a delirium, and was buried, or rather covered, in the same manner. Our number was now reduced to fourteen persons; yet we did not think it prudent to increase the allowance of provisions, but still kept it at the rate originally fixed on, of a quarter of a pound of beef *per diem*.

The

The mate and I had frequently gone out together, since we were shipwrecked, to try if we could discover any traces of inhabitants, but hitherto without success. About a fortnight after we had fixed ourselves in the hut, we took the opportunity of a fine day to walk ten or twelve miles up a river, upon the ice, where we observed many tracks of moose-deer and other animals, some of which we might have killed, had we been provided with arms and ammunition. In our progress up the river we discovered several trees cut on one side, as we imagined, by an axe, which gave us reason to think there might be Indians near at hand. On going up to the place we could plainly perceive, that there had been some there lately, by their wig-wam, which still remained with some fresh bark about it. We likewise found the skin of a moose-deer hanging across a pole. We travelled a good way further, in hopes of making some more discoveries of this nature; but to no purpose. It gave us nevertheless some satisfaction to find, that we were in a place where inhabitants had been lately,

as it was probable they might again return there. In case this should happen, I cut a long pole and stuck it in the ice upon the river; then with my knife, which I always took care to preserve, as it was the only one amongst us, cut a piece of bark from a birch tree, and forming it into the shape of a hand, with the forefinger extended and pointing towards our hut, fixed it on the top of the pole, and took away the moose-skin, in order that they might perceive that some persons had been on the spot since they left it, and the route they had taken on their return. We then pursued the way to our habitation, and communicated this agreeable information to our companions, who were not yet able to move about: trifling as the hopes were which we could in reason derive from this discovery, yet it gave them considerable satisfaction. Twenty days being elapsed since our shipwreck, and our provisions being very much reduced, I began to entertain a suspicion, that there was some foul play during my absence at different times from the hut in search of inhabitants. I was therefore determined to find

find out the truth, if possible, by keeping a constant watch at night ; by which means I at length discovered, that the depredators were no other than the captain and two sailors, who had consumed no less than seventy pounds, besides a quantity of onions, in so short a space of time. To prevent such unfair practices for the future, the mate and I never went out together, one of us constantly remaining in the hut.

We continued in a state of suspense from our last discovery for some days, when giving up at length all hopes of seeing any Indians or inhabitants in this place, having provisions only for six weeks longer, and a few of our men, together with the captain, being recovered, I proposed leaving our habitation, with as many as could work in the boat, in search of inhabitants. This proposal was unanimously assented to ; but when we came to think how it was to be put in execution, a new difficulty started itself, namely, that of repairing the boat, which had been beat in such a manner by the sea upon the beach,
that

that every seam was open. We first attempted to stop them with dry oakum, but soon found that it would not answer the intended purpose, and having saved no pitch from on board the wreck, we began to despair of the possibility of repairing them. I, at length, thought of making a kind of succedaneum for pitch of the Canadian balsam, which, as I before mentioned, had been shipped for apples, and had been by us brought on shore under that deception. We accordingly went to work in making the experiment, and boiled a quantity of the balsam in the iron kettle we had saved, and frequently taking it off the fire to cool, we soon brought it to a proper consistence. A sufficient quantity of it being prepared, we turned up the boat, and having cleaned her bottom, gave her a coat of the balsam, which effectually stopped up all crevices for the present. This done, we got a small sail rigged to a mast, which shipped and unshipped occasionally; and then pitched upon the persons who were to go with me in the boat.

By

By the 1st of January, with much difficulty and fatigue, we got our boat in tolerable condition, so that she could swim without making much water; likewise our mast and sail rigged, in case we should happen to get a fair wind, which we could not often expect on this coast at the present season of the year; for, during the winter months, it blows almost constantly from west to north-west, which is immediately on the land. We could not expect therefore to have much occasion for our sail; nevertheless it might sometimes be serviceable, and afford some relief to the rowers. We had agreed to take six in the boat, viz. the captain and mate, two sailors, myself and servant: of the others none were so far recovered as to be judged equal to the fatigues we might expect in this expedition. Our shoes being all nearly worn out, my employment, during the whole of the next day, was to make a kind of mowkifins, or Indian shoes, of canvas. My needle was nothing more than the handle of a pewter spoon, which I had fashioned as well as I could for the purpose, and the same

same canvas supplied me with thread. As soon as I had made twelve pair, which was two for each man in our party, we divided the provisions that remained into fourteen equal parts, which amounted only to a quarter of a pound of beef *per* day for six weeks; those who were to stay behind, sharing as much as we who were to go in the boat, notwithstanding the great fatigue which we had every reason to expect. Every necessary preliminary being adjusted, we proposed setting off the next day; but the wind blowing fresh at north-west, were obliged to remain where we were till the 4th. By this time the ice, floating in prodigious quantities on the coast, and in some places collecting, and blocking up the bays, rendered our undertaking extremely hazardous; yet we thought it more adviseable to face any danger, and to encounter any hardship, than to remain in our present situation with a certainty of starving.

In the afternoon of the 4th, the wind moderating, we got our provisions, and whatever little matters might be of service
to

to us, into the boat ; and, having taken leave of our companions, set off on our expedition. Having got about eight miles from the place of our shipwreck, the wind began to increase and blow very hard at south-east, which was immediately off the shore. The boat, as well as the oars, being none of the best, we were on the point of being blown out to sea, but by dint of rowing made shift to get into a deep bay about a mile a-head, where we thought we might pass the night with safety. Having got every thing on shore, we hauled our boat up as high as our strength would permit, so as to prevent the sea from doing her any more damage. This done, we set to work in lighting our fire, and cutting our wood for the night : we likewise cut some pine-branches, the smaller of which served us to lie on, and the larger, in the form of a wigwam, to shelter us from the inclemency of the weather.

The place we had landed on was a fine sandy beach, with little or no snow on it. Having observed some small pieces of

G

wood

wood cast on shore by the tide, that had formerly been cut with an axe, and a number of long poles scattered along the edge of the bank, which had likewise been cut in the same manner, I thought it likely there might be some inhabitants near at hand; and proposed, as soon as we had taken a little refreshment, to go along the beach to a high point of land at about two miles distance, which was clear of wood, and appeared to be cultivated; thinking from thence we might make some useful discoveries. I accordingly set out soon after with two of the men; and, before we had proceeded a mile, saw the remains of a shallop, or Newfoundland fishing-boat, almost covered with sand, which seemed to have been set on fire. This gave us hopes of discovering something else to our satisfaction, and we proceeded as fast as we could to the point of land. Having gained the top of it, we descried, to our inexpressible joy, a few houses about half a mile distant, towards which we directed our course, having no doubt but that we should now meet with some relief; but on coming up to them,

them, found they were only the remains of some old store-houses, which had been built there for the curing of cod-fish, and to all appearance had been abandoned some years before.

This was a mortifying disappointment to us. We determined however to make the most of our discovery; and observing a number of old casks lying about in different parts, we searched them, as well as the houses, very minutely, in hopes of finding some provisions; but to no purpose. As we walked along the point, we gathered about a quart of cranberries, some of which we eat, preserving the remainder for our companions. Having reconnoitred every part of this point, without any further success, we returned to our boat, and communicating the discoveries we made to our companions, gave them their share of the berries we had gathered. Even these discoveries gave us much satisfaction, as they tended to confirm our hopes of finding some inhabitants in the course of our voyage along the coast.

In the mean time, the wind came round to the north-west, and blew with such violence as to prevent us from proceeding on our voyage. It continued so for two days, when, happening to get up in the middle of the night, I was astonished on observing, while the wind continued blowing as hard as ever, that the sea was entirely without agitation. I immediately awoke the mate, to inform him of this extraordinary phenomenon; and going down to the beach together to know the cause, we found the sea all covered with ice, nothing but a large sheet of it being to be seen for leagues around. This was an alarming circumstance, as it seemed to preclude all possibility of proceeding any farther, and might give us cause even to regret having left our habitations: for, though we were so near, it was impossible to return by land, besides other impediments, on account of the depth of snow, which was impassable unless with snow-shoes.

The wind continued to blow from the same quarter for two days longer; and at length, on the 9th, it became perfectly calm.

calm. Next morning the wind came round to the south-east, which was directly off the land, and in a short time blew extremely hard, so that by four o'clock in the afternoon, there was not a piece of ice to be seen along the coast, the whole of it being blown out to sea. This was a very pleasing sight to us, as it gave us a prospect of being extricated from our present dreary situation. However, the violence of the wind prevented us from moving till the 11th of January, when the weather being moderate, and a fine light breeze blowing along the coast, we launched our boat with much difficulty, being greatly reduced in strength for want of a due degree of nourishment. Having got round the clear point of the land, we hoisted our sail and put before the wind.

The weather being very moderate, and little or no sea running, we made tolerable way, and had not proceeded far before we descried an extremely high point, about seven leagues a-head, with a continued precipice along the coast, so that it was impossible for us to land on any
part

part of it, before we came to that headland. This made it very dangerous to attempt the passage; for if the wind should happen to come round to the north-west, we must infallibly have perished amongst the rocks. But danger was no longer an object to be considered by us; so we got out two oars, not being able to use any more, as the boat had been so much damaged, that two men were constantly employed in keeping her clear of water, and with the assistance of a fair wind made the point about eleven o'clock at night; but finding no place that we could possibly land on, we were obliged to keep along the coast till two in the morning, when the wind increasing, and a stony beach appearing, on which we should not have thought it expedient to land had the wind been moderate, we were obliged to put ashore, and immediately got our provisions out of the boat. The beach was of some height from the surface of the water, the sea having beat the gravel up into a kind of bank; which rendered it impossible for us to haul our boat up. We were therefore obliged to leave her to the mercy of the sea.

The

The place where we landed was a beach of about four hundred yards in length, bounded at the distance of about fifty yards from the water's edge by a precipice of at least one hundred feet in height, which inclosed it on all sides. If the wind should come round to the north-west, we knew that we should be entirely deprived of shelter, yet, as it blew too fresh for us to attempt putting to sea again, we were obliged to remain there, notwithstanding these inconveniencies.

On the 13th the wind came round to the north-west, and blowing very hard, the sea beat with such violence against the shore, as to drive our boat twenty yards higher than she was, and to beat several holes in her bottom. Now was the time for us to feel all the miseries of our present situation; for being surrounded by precipices, which prevented us from sheltering ourselves in the woods, and having so little covering, and no firing but what we collected from some pieces of timber, which floated accidentally upon the shore, we could but just keep ourselves from absolute

solute freezing. The same weather continued for eight days, with a prodigious fall of snow, a circumstance that added to our other inconveniences. At length, on the 21st, the weather became more moderate, and the snow ceased, having in the course of this last week fallen to the depth of three feet perpendicular. This gave us an opportunity of cooking our provisions, which we had done but once since our landing. Even this was a great loss to us, as the water that the meat was boiled in afforded us almost as much nourishment as the meat itself.

Next day we contrived with much labour to turn our boat halfway over, in order to examine the damage she had received, which we found considerable; the coat of balsam being entirely rubbed off, and several holes made in her bottom. We expected the ice would go to sea, as it had done once before, when ever the wind should come round to the southward; and therefore thought, if we could but get our boat repaired, that we might still have some chance of meeting with inhabitants.

bitants. But the great difficulty was how to repair it; for we had no pitch or balsam left, and but little dry oakum, which was of no service to us without the former. After trying various methods, we at last gave it up as a thing entirely impracticable, and began to turn our thoughts towards some other means of getting out of this bleak and barren place, to search for relief in an inhabited country.

Though it was impossible for us to climb the precipice by which we were encompassed, yet, if we were determined to abandon our boat, we imagined, that we might easily get into the woods, by walking along shore upon the ice, which still covered the sea, and had strength sufficient to bear any weight. In fact the mate and I proposed walking a few miles on it, in order to make the experiment. We accordingly set out, and had not proceeded far before we came to the entrance of a river, and a fine sandy beach, where, had our good fortune directed us to land, we might have lived more comfortably, and have preserved our boat. But what

H was

was to be done now that we could get into the woods? We could not think of walking across them in search of a cultivated country: besides that we should be entirely ignorant how to direct our course, the depth of snow, which had by this time increased to six feet in the wood, rendered it impossible for us to travel without snow-shoes. After consulting together, we at last came to a resolution of taking the next day what provisions we had upon our backs, and coasting along the ice, till we could discover some inhabitants, expecting, from its present appearance of strength, that it would remain for some time longer: and the wind having drifted the greatest part of the snow off it, we computed that we should be able to walk about ten miles a day, even in our present weak and reduced condition.

This being fully resolved, we were to set out the morning of the 24th; but on the night preceding it, the wind came round to the south-east, and blew hard, attended with snow and rain; so that in the morning, as I already apprehended
would

would be the case, that whole sheet of ice, which the night before looked so firm, was demolished, or driven out to sea. Thus were all our schemes frustrated—neither ice to walk on, nor boat to carry us through the water; not even a possibility of moving from this place, where we were embayed, and surrounded by insurmountable precipices. Thus circumstanced, we were again obliged to turn our thoughts towards some scheme for repairing our boat: upon that our only hope depended. We had plenty of oakum to stop up the holes and seams, but nothing to substitute in the room of pitch, to prevent the water from penetrating. I at length thought of a plan, which I imagined might have the wished-for effect, namely, that of throwing water over the oakum, and letting it freeze into a cake of ice. As soon as day appeared, I resolved to put this scheme to the test, and having cleared the boat of snow and gravel, immediately went to work. The men in general made light of my undertaking, and assisted with much reluctance, thinking that they were throwing away their labour. However, I

soon convinced them to the contrary; for by four o'clock in the afternoon, by continually throwing water over the oakum, we froze up every seam and hole in such a manner, that not a drop of water could enter, as long as the weather continued freezing, as at present.

On the 27th of January, the weather being moderate, and a light breeze directly off the shore, we got our boat very carefully launched, and set off early in the morning from this ill-omened bay. We had the pleasure to observe that the boat made little or no water, so that we were enabled to keep our four oars continually at work. As we advanced along the coast, we found it still bordered by nothing but barren precipices, with every four or five miles perhaps a small sandy beach.

The weather continued very moderate all the day of the 27th, so that by six o'clock in the evening, we computed that we had rowed about twelve miles from where we departed in the morning. This indeed
would

would be but an indifferent day's work for people in health and vigour, but a great deal for those in our circumstances; not only being extremely weakened and reduced, but the boat itself being very heavy and unwieldy, from the quantity of ice in it. We put ashore about six o'clock upon a small sandy beach, and by placing oars under our boat, dragged her carefully some yards from the water; so that she lay very safe while the wind continued as it then was. We next cut some branches, and having made a fire, sheltered ourselves as well as possible in the wood. Our tinder being nearly consumed, I was obliged to furnish a fresh supply, by cutting away the back part of my shirt, which I had worn ever since we left the ship.

A shower of rain the next day unfortunately melted all the ice off our boat: we were therefore prevented from going any farther till a return of the frost, and had the mortification to lose the benefit of a fine day, in the course of which we might have proceeded with a good boat several leagues more on our journey.

What

What made the matter worse, was that our provisions were now reduced to two pounds and a half of beef for each man. On the morning of the 29th, the mate having wandered a little distance from our fire, returned in haste to inform me, that he had discovered a partridge perched on the bough of a tree, which he thought I might possibly devise some method of catching. I immediately went to the place where he had seen it, and found it in the same situation as before. Observing that the bird was very tame, and not above fourteen feet from the ground, I cut down a long pole, and taking part of the rope-yarn that fastened my canvas shoes, made a running loop of it, and fixed it to the end of the pole; then walking softly under the tree, and lifting the pole gently up, I fixed the loop about the partridge's neck, and giving it a sudden jerk, closed the loop, and secured the bird. The mate, as well as myself, as soon as I had caught it, laughed very heartily, for the first time that either of us had any inclination to smile since our shipwreck. We then went towards the
fire

fire with our prize, and boiled it in some melted snow, together with a little salt water, to give the broth a relish: having divided it, when dressed, into six equal parts, and cast lots for the choice of each, we sat down to what we found a delicious meal; the only one, excepting the quart of cranberries, for which we were indebted to chance, or providence, since we had been cast upon the island.

On the afternoon of the 29th it began to freeze hard, when we took the advantage of the frost to stop the boat's leaks as before; and the wind still continuing moderate, we launched her as soon as that business was completed, and put to sea. The day being almost spent before we set off, we could not make above seven miles to a sandy beach and thick wood, which seemed to afford a tolerable shelter. In this place we passed the night; and the next day, the weather being still favourable, we launched our boat betimes in the morning, in order to get before night as far as possible on our journey; but we had not proceeded above six miles,
before

before the wind freshening up from the south-east, obliged us to put ashore, and haul up our boat.

A heavy fall of rain, which continued the whole day, rendered our situation extremely uncomfortable, and melted again the icy calking of the boat. We were therefore to console ourselves, as well as we could, in the certainty of remaining here till a return of the frost, and mean while proposed to reconnoitre, as far as our reduced state would allow us, into the country. In this however we were prevented by the quantity of snow which still lay on the ground, and was not yet sufficiently frozen to bear our weight without rackets or snow-shoes. Towards the spring of the year, in these cold climates, they may for the most part be dispensed with, when the snow has become more condensed by its own weight, the influence of the sun, and the rains which begin to fall at this season. The frost then returning, after the thaw, forms a kind of incrustation on the surface, that will bear a man's weight without sinking

ing. Had this season been arrived, we should have abandoned our crazy boat, and, taking the little provision we still possessed, have made an attempt to discover inhabitants, by a march into the heart of the country; perhaps it was fortunate we could not attempt it, as in all probability we should have perished in the woods.

Not having it in our power to wander towards any other part, we walked along the shore as far as we were able, and saw nothing that could attract our notice but some stumps of trees, from which the trunks might have been cut some years before: from this circumstance we could collect no very sanguine hope of being near an inhabited country. Soon after, the wind coming round to the north-west, and bringing the frost along with it, we were once more enabled to repair our boat, and to prepare for launching it, as soon as the wind should abate its violence. This happening in some degree on the 1st of February, we immediately embarked, and pursued our coasting voyage; but the

1

severity

severity of the cold having formed a quantity of ice, it was with extreme labour that we contrived to get five miles before night, one of our party being employed in breaking the ice with a pole, and clearing it from the bows of the boat.

The following day, the wind blowing fresh from the north-west quarter prevented us again from proceeding any farther till the 3d, when, coming round to the west, which is directly along the shore, and the most favourable that could blow for us, we were enabled to embark, and pursue our voyage. Our boat, notwithstanding all our diligence in calking, made now so much water, that we were obliged to keep one man constantly at work in baling it out with a camp-kettle. The wind, however, was as fair as we could wish, and being neither too slack nor too violent, we for some time went at the rate of four miles an hour, with the assistance of our oars; but soon after, the wind increasing, we laid in our oars, and ran under our sail alone, at the rate of about five miles an hour.

After

After having run above sixteen miles, we discovered an exceeding high land, about six leagues distant, with several other mountains and large bays between us; and it being yet early in the day, a fine wind, and no great sea, we were in hopes, if the wind should not increase too much, that we should be able to reach it before night. As we proceeded along the coast, we found it in every part high and rocky, which made us very uneasy lest the wind should rise before we could make the head-land. About two o'clock in the afternoon, when we supposed we were within three leagues of it, we discovered an island about twenty miles from the main; and, on comparing circumstances, we concluded that the island must be that of St. Paul, and the high land the north point of Cape Breton. The prodigious height of the land led us into an erroneous computation of its distance; for, notwithstanding we had supposed that we were within three leagues of it when we first discovered the island of St. Paul, we found, before we reached it, that we had run near five leagues.

It was almost dark by the time we reached the North Cape; where finding no place to land, we were obliged to double the cape, and continue our journey. The wind now began to freshen, and we had a heavy sea from the north-east to encounter, as soon as we came opposite to the cape. After having doubled it, our course lay in a very different direction from what it had been in the morning; so that we were obliged to strike our sail, and take to the oars. The wind at the same time blew so hard off the high lands, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep along the coast: had we not been assisted by a heavy swell, that came from the north-east, we must certainly have been blown out to sea.

Finding no place to land during the night, we continued rowing as close as we could to the rocks, till about five in the morning; when hearing the sea run on the shore very long and heavy, we imagined that we must be off a sandy beach. We accordingly rowed towards the land, and at the distance of fifty yards,
for

for it was yet dark, were able to discern a beach at least four miles in length. It was not however a convenient place for us to put in, on account of the surf, and a long and heavy sea that rolled on it; yet being so much fatigued with rowing, that we were incapable of proceeding any farther, we were obliged to attempt a landing. This we effected with more ease than we looked for, and suffered no other inconvenience but that of having our boat nearly filled with water on the beach. Having landed, our first care was to haul up the boat, that she might meet with no further damage from the sea. We then got into the woods, which lay close to the shore; and as I had taken the precaution to put our tinder-box in my bosom, before we landed, to preserve it from the water, we contrived to kindle a fire; a refreshment we had much occasion for, having got wet in landing, and being in so weak and reduced a condition, that it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep ourselves awake for a few minutes when before the fire; so that we were under the necessity of watching in turn; lest, all being

ing asleep together, the fire should go out, and we should be frozen to death. Having now time to consider every circumstance, and finding, as soon as daylight appeared, that the land still continued to have an opposite bearing to that on the other side of the point, we had no doubt remaining, but that we were upon the North Cape of the island of Breton, which, together with Cape Roy on the island of Newfoundland, marks the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Our provisions were now entirely consumed, and having not the most distant prospect of getting any more, we were ready to abandon ourselves to despair. As we were certain of being on an inhabited island, we might have flattered ourselves with the hopes of getting relief, by persevering in our dilatory progress, had we wherewithal to provide for our immediate subsistence. Having weighed the necessity of the case, and the misery of perishing by hunger, I was of opinion, as well as the mate, that it would be most advisable to sacrifice one for the preservation
of

of the rest ; and that the most proper method would be by casting lots, which should be the unfortunate victim. But, this shocking, though prudent, resolution we agreed to put off to the last extremity.

We had not been able to secure our boat so effectually, but that the sea had beat her higher up on the beach, and filled her with sand. We were obliged therefore to set two of the men to work in clearing her, and afterwards in stopping the leaks, as already described ; while the remainder of our party were detached by different routes along the shore, to see if they could find any kind of provision. The mate and myself travelled along the sandy beach till we were prevented from going any farther by an inlet of water, when we were a good deal surpris'd to observe the tide ebb and flow every ten minutes. We were not however at present in a disposition to pay much regard to this or any other extraordinary appearance of nature ; and seeing a great quantity of oyster-shells lying upon the shore, we searched them diligently, in hopes of
finding

finding some that were full ; but without success. This again made us curse our destiny, that we should have been cast away on so barren and miserable a country, and in such an unlucky time of the year, when we were not only deprived of the relief we might have got, at any other season, from the natural productions of the earth ; but when even the animals, inhabitants of both elements, had retired to their holes and hiding-places, to shield themselves from the intense cold which prevails during the winter in this inhospitable climate.

We still continued our search, notwithstanding the ill success we had hitherto experienced, and contrived at length to gather about two quarts of hips, or wild rose-buds, by throwing up the snow, and searching in different parts of the bank. Having with this sorry food allayed in some degree the keen sense of hunger, and the wind having become somewhat more moderate, we got into our boat and pushed off, the day being already drawing towards a conclusion. Our progress was however soon impeded by the quantity of ice that floated

floated upon the water ; which obliged us to put ashore on another part of the same beach. In landing I had the misfortune to let the tinder-box fall from my bosom into the water, by which means we were unable to kindle a fire ; and being exceedingly wet, as was generally the case when we landed, we were in this place in a most uncomfortable situation, and suffered much from the cold. We therefore thought it best to get into our boat again as fast as possible, and return to the spot from whence we came, in hopes of finding some fire still remaining.

It was with the greatest difficulty we got back, being the whole way under the necessity of breaking through the ice, which had by this time formed almost into a solid sheet. We were very anxious lest our fire should meanwhile have gone out, and thought it a lucky circumstance we had not been able to go any farther from it. On our arrival at the place, we had the satisfaction to find it was not totally extinguished : had this been the case, we must have perished in the course of the

K

night.

night. The fire being repaired, I cut up the remainder of my shirt to make some more tinder; and, as the damage it got had nearly proved so fatal to us, was resolved to be more particular in my care of it for the future.

On the 8th of February, the wind came round to the south-west, which cleared off the ice, and enabled us to leave this place by ten o'clock in the morning. As we proceeded along the shore, we found it was not quite so rocky as it had been on the other side of the north cape. We were therefore able to land this night without difficulty within a large rock, by which we were sheltered from the wind and sea. We were here very comfortably situated, in every respect, except our want of provisions. The next day, the weather continuing moderate, we had again proceeded about eight miles on our journey, when the wind beginning to blow so hard as to raise a considerable swell, we were obliged to steer to the shore; and in landing had the misfortune to lose two of our oars, which were washed overboard by the surf.

On

On the following day the wind lulled; and we immediately took the advantage of it to put to sea. We had now but two oars remaining; which being double-manned, we contrived to get about six miles before night. This was a very hard day's work, considering our present weak condition; for having been a length of time without tasting any kind of nourishment, we were so much reduced in strength, that when we got on shore, we could scarcely walk for fifty yards together.

The weather being unfavourable on the 11th, we were under the necessity of remaining the whole day in the same resting-place; and having leisure to search about the shore, we were fortunate enough to find a few rose-buds, which we esteemed at present a great delicacy. Had we not met with this supply, it would have been absolutely requisite to put our above-mentioned scheme into execution. We thought ourselves extremely unlucky in not having found, in the course of our wanderings, so much as the body of any dead animal:

nor, except the partridge, did we see any live one, that we had the smallest chance of capturing. At different times we had hopes of catching some of the otters that we frequently saw on the ice, particularly on the small rivers and inlets: but we never found them at any distance from the holes, which they continually kept open, to give themselves a free passage in and out of the water. We likewise discovered at different times some beavers' houses; but could not ensnare any of the animals.

On the 12th the wind became moderate, and we proceeded once more on our journey. The coast seemed to diminish in height as we passed along it, which made us hope we were now approaching the cultivated part of the island. Next day the weather got milder, with a fall of rain: so that it was with difficulty we could get our boat to swim, the ice thawing gradually off the bottom. This obliged us to put ashore long before night; and when we had landed, and made a fire, we found no other immediate want but that of provisions, having consumed all the hips or
rose-

rose-buds that we had gathered at our last landing-place.

Having reconnoitred very carefully all around, and searched in every part under the snow, we were not able to procure ourselves even that miserable sustenance. Being now driven to the last extremity, we were obliged to sacrifice our prospect of travelling any farther to the immediate preservation of our lives. About a dozen tallow candles remained, which we had hitherto employed in stopping the leaks of our boat, as fast as she sprung one in any particular place. Of these we divided a small part among us; which gave us some relief for the present. The two following days we coasted for a few miles, searching for a place where we could meet with some hips; but our search proved ineffectual. This was the only kind of food we could now expect; and had we discovered any place that abounded with them, it was our intention to draw up the boat there, and remain till they were consumed.

We

We began now to be fully sensible of our desperate situation, and to expect that our fate would be that of perishing with hunger. Notwithstanding that idea was horrid enough, yet what gave me the most uneasiness, was, that my friends would probably for ever remain uninformed of our wretched catastrophe. It may appear to those, who have not been in similar circumstances, that this would take up but a small part of one's reflection, in comparison with the dread of such a death ; yet, however it might have been with the rest of my companions, it was that idea that chiefly preyed upon my spirits. In order to prevent it, as far as possible, I took every occasion of cutting out my name on the bark of the largest trees. The fatigue of cutting it, as well as the preservation of my knife, which I observed before was the only one amongst us, would not allow me to be more particular. But on the walls of the store-houses, which we had discovered in the beginning of our progress, I wrote a short account of our disasters in English and French, and requested, if any persons should fall in with it, that they

they would transmit it to my father at Quebec.

On the 17th, we made another division of a part of the tallow candles that yet remained; and on the following day, the wind being favourable, we proceeded about five miles; where finding a fine, flat country, and a sandy beach that extended for a considerable way, and being so much debilitated, that we knew it would be impossible for us to go much farther, we put on shore, with a determined resolution to perish on this place, unless some unforeseen accident should bring us relief. To attempt drawing up our boat would in our present weak condition be a vain undertaking, so we were obliged to leave her exposed to the mercy of the sea. All that we could preserve was our axe, a saw, and the sail of the boat, which we generally made use of as a covering.

As soon as we landed, we made it our business to clear away the snow from a particular spot in the entrance of the wood,
where

where we intended to remain ; and having cut some small branches of pine to lie upon, together with some larger to serve for a shelter, which we stuck into the bank of snow that surrounded us, we made our fire. This done, we all went in search of hips, and had the good fortune to find about a pint of them, which, boiled up with a couple of tallow candles, afforded us a tolerable meal.

The next day we passed without any kind of provision, and being apprehensive that our little remaining strength would soon desert us, we employed ourselves in cutting and piling as much wood as we were able, to supply the fire. Mean while the waves had beat our boat so high upon the beach, as to be quite dry as soon as the wind subsided, and to deprive us of the power of putting to sea again, had we been disposed to do it : for our strength was by no means equal to the task of moving her a single foot.

We again employed the whole day of the 19th in search of hips : but it was
not

not attended with any success. Our tallow candles were therefore the only resource we had left, and by this time they became reduced to two. We found ourselves so much weakened the following day, that we could make no further use of our axe, and were under the necessity of creeping about in our turns, to gather for our fire the rotten branches of trees, that lay scattered upon the ground. As we had not a proper quantity of fuel, the fire that we kept up was but just sufficient to preserve us from freezing: for, though the season was so far advanced towards the spring, yet, excepting some particular days, the weather was as cold as in the month of December.

Having now no more than two tallow candles remaining, and finding no longer a possibility of gathering any hips, being too weak even to search for them, we thought it likely that we might derive some degree of nourishment from the kelp-weed, of which there was a quantity lying upon the shore. We accordingly collected a little of it, and with melted snow

L

boiled

boiled it for a few hours in a kettle ; but, at the conclusion, found it very little tenderer than at first. We then melted one of our tallow candles in the liquor, and having supped it up, and eat a quantity of the weed, our appetite became somewhat satiated : but in about two hours time we were all affected with a very uneasy sensation, and were soon after seized with a fit of vomiting, without being able to bring the offending matter entirely off the stomach. This fit of vomiting having continued for about four hours, we found ourselves tolerably easy, but at the same time exceedingly exhausted.

On the 22d we made use of some more kelp-weed and our last tallow candle. It still operated in the same manner, but not to so violent a degree as it had done before. The next day the wind blew very moderate from the north-west, and brought a severe frost along with it. We had now an opportunity to repair our boat ; and, if our strength had been sufficient to launch it into the water, we should have changed our resolution, and have quitted the place.

We

We made indeed a faint attempt to launch the boat ; but, on finding that we could not move her an inch from where she lay upon the shore, we were obliged to give over the design. Our candles being all consumed, we were under the necessity of boiling the kelp-weed without the mixture of tallow, which, however nauseous at any other time, afforded us then, not only some kind of nourishment, but even an exquisite relish.

Having for three days tasted of no other food but the kelp-weed, we began to swell to an alarming degree. This we were at a loss whether to attribute to the kelp-weed, or to the cold (for we were not able to keep a sufficient fire): however I thought then, and do still believe, that it proceeded from the former; for, notwithstanding we had often before been exposed to the utmost severity of the frost, and sometimes without any shelter whatever, yet we had never found ourselves affected with this extraordinary symptom; but, on the contrary, were as much reduced in bulk as we were in strength: whereas in

a few days, the swelling had increased to such a degree all over our bodies, that, notwithstanding the little flesh we had upon our bones, we could sink our fingers two inches deep on the skin; the impression of which remained visible for above an hour after. Hunger nevertheless still obliged us to make use of the kelp-weed. I have never since consulted with any naturalist or physician about the extraordinary effects of this weed; yet doubt not but they may be accounted for from natural causes.

We passed a few days more in the same manner; at the expiration of which we were so much swollen, as to be almost deprived of our sight, and so reduced in strength, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep our fire in by crawling about in turn, and breaking the rotten branches that lay scattered upon the snow. The time was now arrived, when I thought it highly expedient to put the plan before mentioned into execution; but on feeling the pulse of my companions, found that some of them were rather averse to the proposal; the desire of life still pre-
vailing

vailing above every other sentiment, notwithstanding the wretched condition they were in, and the impossibility even of preserving it by any other method.

I thought it an extraordinary instance of infatuation, that men should prefer the certainty of a lingering and miserable death, to the distant chance of one more immediate and less painful. However, on consulting with the mate what was to be done, I found, that though they objected to the proposal of casting lots which should be the victim, yet all concurred in the necessity of some one being sacrificed for the preservation of the rest. The only question was how it should be determined; when, by a kind of reasoning more agreeable to the dictates of self-love than of justice, it was agreed on, that, as the captain was now so exceedingly reduced, as to be evidently the first who would sink under our present complicated misery; as he had been the person to whom we considered ourselves in some measure indebted for all our misfortunes; and further, as he had, ever since our shipwreck, been
the

the most remiss in his exertions towards the general good, he was undoubtedly the person who should be first sacrificed.

I must confess, that I thought at that time, there was some colour of truth in this conclusion: yet I was not a little shocked at the captain's intended fate, although I had more reason than any one else to be incensed against him, not only on account of his neglect of duty, and his mal-practices at the hut in purloining our provisions, but for another reason likewise. After our shipwreck, I had discovered by some papers, which had been washed on shore, that, though the captain's pretended destination was to New York, yet his real one was to the West Indies, if he could possibly effect it. Thus would he have baffled General Haldimand's intentions, in sending me with dispatches, that might be of the first consequence to this country; and not only have disappointed, but also have defrauded me of the money which I paid him for my passage.

The

The determination now made was kept secret from the captain; and it would have been impossible for us to live many days longer without putting it into execution, had we not happily met with relief from a quarter whence we little expected it. On the 28th of February, as we were all lying about our fire, we thought that we heard the sound of human voices in the woods; and soon after discovered two Indians, with guns in their hands, who did not seem yet to have perceived us. This sight gave us fresh strength and spirits: so, getting up, we advanced towards them with the greatest eagerness imaginable.

As soon as we were perceived by the Indians, they started back, and seemed fixed for a few moments to the ground with surprise and horror. This indeed is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, that, besides the amazement they must naturally have felt on suddenly meeting with white men in this uninhabited part of the island, our appearance itself was enough to alarm the most intrepid:
our

our cloaths being almost entirely burnt off, so that we were bare in several parts of our bodies, our limbs swollen to a prodigious bulk, our eyes from the same cause almost invisible, and our hair in a confused and dishevelled state about our heads and shoulders, particularly of those who wore it long; for we had not been able to comb it since our shipwreck. As we advanced towards the Indians, some of us wept, while others laughed, through joy. Being a little recovered from their surprise, they did not shew much inclination to accost us, till I got up to one of them, and took him by the hand; when he shook it for some time very heartily; the usual mode of salutation among the Indians.

They began at length to shew marks of compassion at our distressed appearance; and I imagine their shyness at first proceeded from the repugnance which it naturally inspired: for, these Indians being converted to Christianity, I will not attribute it to a motive so contrary to that doctrine, as the idea of the trouble they might expect, without any compensation,

in relieving us. They then walked with us to our fire, and, sitting down by it together, one of them, who could speak a little broken French, desired we would inform him whence we came, and the particulars of the accident that brought us there. I accordingly gave him as concise an account as possible of the disasters and fatigues we had undergone: during the relation, he seemed to be very much affected at our sufferings.

Having finished my narration, I asked the Indian, if he could furnish us with any kind of provisions; to which he answered in the affirmative. Observing that we had very little fire, he suddenly started up, and took our axe in his hand; when looking at it, and laughing heartily, I suppose at the badness of it, he threw it down again, and taking his tomahawk from his side, which is a small hatchet that the Indians always carry about them, he went, and, in a short time, cut a quantity of wood, which he brought and threw upon our fire. This done, he took up his

M

gun,

gun, and, without saying a word, went off with his companion.

This would have been a very alarming circumstance to persons ignorant of the Indian manners ; but I was so well acquainted with the humour of these people, who seldom speak when there is not an absolute occasion for it, that I doubted not but they were gone for some provisions, and that we should see them again very shortly. Notwithstanding the length of time we had been without nourishment, I must confess, that I felt but little inclination to eat: the fire which the Indian had made, was the greatest refreshment to us, as we had been for many days without a good one.

After about three hours had elapsed, during which interval some of our party were not without anxiety, lest the Indians should never return, we perceived them coming round a point at a small distance in a bark canoe. Being arrived and landed upon the beach, they took out of their canoe

canoe some smoaked venison, and a bladder of seal oil, which they brought up to our fire-place: having put some of the meat into our kettle, they boiled it in melted snow, and then gave each of us a very small quantity of it, together with some oil. I knew very well their reason for being so sparing of their meat; for eating a quantity of gross food in our present state might be attended with the most fatal consequences. It gave me no small pleasure to find that the Indians were so careful of us.

This light repast being ended, the Indians desired three of us to embark in their canoe, that being all she could carry at a time, and proceed from this place to their hut, which lay five miles farther by water, and about a mile from the shore, in the middle of the woods. We were received at the sea side by three other Indians, and about twelve or fourteen women and children, who had been there waiting our arrival. Having landed from the canoe, we were conducted by these last to their habitation in the wood, which

consisted of three huts or wigwams, there being that number of families amongst them: meanwhile the same two Indians as had brought us, went back in their canoe for the three remaining men of our party. On arriving at the hut, we were treated with the greatest humanity by these people; they gave us some broth to sup, but would not suffer us to eat meat, or any kind of substantial food whatever.

The two Indians being come back with our companions, and having all received a tolerable refreshment, I was desired, at the request of a very old woman, who appeared to be mistress or mother of the families present, to give them an account of our transactions since the day of our shipwreck. I accordingly gave a more particular account than I had done before in French to the Indian whom I have already mentioned; and he explained it in his own language to the other Indians. In the course of my relation I could perceive that the old woman was exceedingly affected at certain parts of it; which gave me much satisfaction, as I thence derived

rived hopes that they would continue to treat us with the same humanity. As soon as I had done speaking, the old woman rose up, and after supplying us with some more broth, desired the interpreter to explain to us the shipwreck of the famous French partisan St. Luc Lacorne on his passage from Canada to France.

He informed me that this gentleman, of whose shipwreck I had already heard something, was cast away directly upon the North Cape; that a great number of persons perished on the occasion, amongst whom were two of Mr. St. Luc's children, who were drowned in his arms, as he was attempting to carry them on shore. He likewise informed me, that after his having remained five days there, and suffered much from cold and hunger, he himself had relieved him, and conducted him to Louisbourg; for which service, he said, Mr. St. Luc was indebted to him thirty pounds, which he promised to remit from Halifax, but had never performed it. Whether this part of the Indian's story be true or not, it is impossible for me to determine;

determine: the gentleman himself is the best acquainted with it. But this I am certain of, that the poor Indians must have earned the money very dearly, in conducting him so far, at the season of the year in which the journey was performed.

These people did every thing in their power to reduce the swelling from our limbs; which they at length accomplished after much difficulty. Having provided for our own immediate wants, our thoughts recurred to those unfortunate men whom we had left by the wreck. We were under much anxiety for them, lest by this time they might have perished with hunger. However, in case they should be still alive, I was determined no means should be omitted for their preservation; and having described to the Indians the part of the island we were cast away upon, asked them, if it was possible to go to their relief?

From the description I gave the Indians of the situation of the river, and of a small island that lay nearly opposite, they
said,

said, that they knew the place perfectly well; that it was above one hundred miles distant, through very difficult paths, over rivers and mountains; and that, if they undertook the journey, they must expect some compensation for their trouble. This indeed was but reasonable: for it could not be expected, that the Indians should leave their hunting, by which alone they subsisted their wives and families, to undergo a fatigue of that kind through pure benevolence: and as to their account of the distance, I could easily give credit to it, as I knew we had come above 150 miles by water. I then informed them, for the first time, for in fact it did not occur to me before, that I had some money, and that, if it would be any object to them, I would pay them for their trouble. They seemed much pleased when I told them that I had money, and desired me to let them look at it. Then taking the purse from my servant, I shewed them the hundred and eighty guineas that it contained; and observing an eagerness in their countenances at the sight of the coin, which I had little expected amongst Indians,

dians, and that the women in particular seemed to have taken a strong fancy to it, I presented them with a guinea each; for which they expressed their satisfaction by laughing, the only method among the savages of displaying every sentiment of that nature.

However I was determined at all events to save the people, if any of them remained alive, though the Indians should be ever so exorbitant in their demands; and made an agreement with them at last, that they should set off the next day, which was the second of March, and that they should receive twenty-five guineas at their departure, and the same sum on their return. This being adjusted, they immediately went to work in making a proper number of mawkifins and snow shoes, for themselves and for the men; and three of them went off the next morning, having received the sum of money agreed for.

After these people knew that I had money, my situation amongst them was not near so comfortable as before: for
they

they became as mercenary as they had hitherto been charitable, and exacted above ten times the value for every little necessary they furnished for myself and the rest of my companions. Besides which, I was under constant apprehension, lest they should be incited by this extraordinary passion for money to plunder us, and leave us in the same destitute condition in which they found us. The only circumstance on which I founded my hope of better treatment from them, was their religion: for, as I mentioned before, they were Christians, and rigid Catholics, having been converted by the French before we got possession of the island. But perhaps it was this very circumstance of their communication with Christians that had inspired them with that vehement love of money. They shewed indeed every mark of attachment to their faith, being very assiduous at their devotions both night and morning; and frequently gave us cause to wish they had not been quite so devout, by disturbing us with their psalm-singing the whole night. I was very much afraid at times, if they had learnt that tenet of

N

their

their sect, of keeping no faith with heretics, that their profession of Christianity would be of little service to us. My servant being an Irish catholic, they were exceedingly fond of him, and heaped their favours upon him very profusely. He joined them for the most part in their roaring, for I cannot with propriety call it singing, and in their prayers; though he did not understand a word of either. Indeed I question much whether they themselves understood them, for they were the most confused jargon I ever heard, compounded of their own and the French language, with the mixture of a few broken Latin phrases, which they had picked up from their converters, the Jesuits.

These insular savages bore in general an exact resemblance in their persons and manners to those on the continent of America. The principal points in which they differed were, in having their hair long, which is peculiar to the women alone among the continental Indians, and in wearing caps and breeches. Their language was very different from that of those nations,

nations, or tribes, which I was acquainted with; though I doubt not but it might have a resemblance to some others upon the continent. I found afterwards, when we got into a part of the island where it was to be had, that they had the same strong propensity to spirituous liquor, so universal among the Indians.

It was some time before we had recovered any degree of strength, or could digest any substantial food. The only kind we could get from the Indians was the flesh of moose-deer, and seal oil; on which they subsist entirely during the time of hunting. Notwithstanding that we found ourselves, after our late miseries, pretty comfortably situated amongst those savages, yet I was anxious to get away, on account of the dispatches I was charged with, which I thought might be of the utmost consequence to his majesty's service; particularly, as I knew that the duplicates were lost. I continued however in so weak a condition, that it was impossible for me to move for some time; and found, as well as my fellow sufferers, that such a
 shock

shock to the constitution was not easily to be repaired.

After being absent near a fortnight, the Indians arrived with three men, who were the only survivors of the eight who had been left behind at the hut. They were in a very reduced and miserable condition, and informed me, on enquiring the particulars of their transactions from the time we left them, that after having consumed all the beef, they lived for some days on the skin of the moose-deer, which we had left entire, not thinking it worth while to make a partition of it. This being consumed, three of them died in a few days of hunger, and the others were under the necessity of subsisting on the flesh of the dead men, till they were relieved by the Indians. One of the remaining five was so imprudently ravenous, when the Indians came to their assistance, as to eat such a quantity of meat, that he expired in a few hours, in the greatest agonies imaginable; and another soon after shot himself accidentally with one of the Indians' guns. Thus was our number, which originally consisted

consisted of nineteen persons, reduced to nine; and I rather wonder how so many persons could, for the space of three months, go through such complicated distresses, from excessive cold, fatigue, and hunger.

We all remained another fortnight among the Indians, during which I was obliged to pay, as before, a most exorbitant price for our diet, and for every necessary that we were provided with. By this time my health being somewhat re-established, and my money at the same time very much reduced, I was resolved to postpone my own convenience to the good of the service, and to proceed as fast as possible with general Haldimand's dispatches, though it was now the most unfavourable season of the year for travelling. I therefore made an agreement with the Indians to conduct me to Hallifax; for which I was to pay them forty-five pounds, and to furnish them with provisions, and all necessaries, at every inhabited place on our way.

It

It was settled that I should depart on the 2d of April, with two Indians, for Halifax, accompanied by Mr. Winslow, a young gentleman who had been a passenger on board the vessel, and was one of the three survivors at the hut, together with my own servant. The Indians were to conduct the remainder of our party to a settlement on Spanish river, about fifty miles distant, where they were to remain till the spring, when an opportunity might offer for them to get by sea to Halifax. Previously to parting I gave the captain cash for a bill on his owner at New York, to provide for the immediate subsistence of himself and the sailors; which bill was afterwards protested by the owner, on the pretence, that the ship being lost, neither master nor crew were entitled to any wages.

We accordingly set off on the day appointed, each carrying four pair of Indian shoes, or mawkisins, a pair of snow-shoes, and provisions for fifteen days. The same day we got to a place called by the English

lish Broad Oar, where we were detained the following day by a snow storm. On the 4th we again proceeded through the woods about five leagues; and on the 5th arrived at a place named Broad Deck, which lies at the entrance of a very fine salt-water lake, called Lake St. Peter. This lake communicates by a narrow inlet with the sea, from which it is distant about sixteen leagues. At this place we met with two families of Indians, who were hunting there, and purchased of them a bark canoe for five pounds; the Indians having informed me, that some parts of this great lake are never frozen, and that it was requisite to have a canoe to pass over those places; and as we were to travel over the ice in other parts of it, I was obliged to purchase two Indian sleighs, in which we were to place the canoe, and drag it after us.

Having remained two days in this place, and provided ourselves with a few other necessary articles, we proceeded on the 7th for a few miles along the lake; but the ice being bad, we were soon obliged
to

to take to the woods. A thaw coming on soon after, with rain, made the snow, which lay to the depth of six feet in the woods, so soft and heavy, that we could travel no longer on our snow-shoes, the snow sticking to them in large quantities. We were therefore obliged to make a fire, and remain here; and the thaw continuing for the space of four days, made us very apprehensive lest the ice should give way altogether: for the spring was now too far advanced to travel any longer upon the snow, unless during a frost. We should then have been under the necessity of waiting till the ice was entirely cleared off the lake; which would have taken at least a fortnight or three weeks from the time of its breaking up; in which case we might have been reduced to a condition equally distressed with that we had been in after our shipwreck, except that we were provided with arms and ammunition.

However the frost returned on the 12th, and the next day we set off, and travelled about six leagues, sometimes on floating pieces of ice, and at others in our canoe,
where

where the lake was open. On the 14th our provisions being nearly exhausted, I proposed going in search of some game, as the country abounded with deer: for the Indians in general never think of providing for the next day's wants, but eat on without reflection whilst they have a morsel of food remaining. I accordingly went with one of the Indians into the woods. We had not been three hours on the hunt, before we discovered a very fine moose-deer; and the Indian shot him in about an hour after. We skinned this animal, which weighed about six hundred pounds, loaded ourselves with some of the best parts of its flesh, as well as the blood, which the Indian took care to collect, putting it in the bladder of the beast; and returned to our canoe. We then sent the other Indian, Mr. Winslow, and my servant, for some more of the meat, of which they brought about an hundred pounds.

Being now well stocked with provisions, we had no reason to apprehend that we should want, in case a return of mild weather should render it impossible for us to

O

travel

travel either upon the lake or in the woods. On the 15th we set out very early in the morning, and pursued our journey about fix leagues, in the same manner as before. The greatest inconvenience that we felt was the want of bread, which the Indians of this country never make use of whilst they are hunting; and being now much wearied with travelling, our strength having been greatly exhausted by our past fatigues, we agreed to make a halt for a day or two in the woods. What renders the travelling through the woods in these cold climates more tolerable than might be supposed during the winter season, is the number of pine-trees and other evergreens, which are interspersed in different parts; the branches of which serve, not only to lie upon, but also as a shelter from the severity of the weather. We chose a spot abounding with these trees, and it is almost inconceivable in how short a time the Indians made us a comfortable habitation of the boughs, called in their language a *wigwam*. Their method of constructing them is as follows: having chosen the spot for their fire, they first clear off the snow,

snow, throwing it up into a bank in a circular form, leaving a vacant space, or passage, to leeward: and it is to be observed, that the more snow there is on the ground the better, as it makes the best part of the shelter. They then cut branches of pines, of a proper length, and placing the thicker ends of them in the bank of snow, bend and interweave them towards the top. These branches are crossed by others, and interwoven with smaller ones, in such a manner, as to afford a sufficient shelter from the wind and from the falling snow. The fire is made in the middle of the wigwam, and the smoke of it goes out by the passage to leeward. The wigwams thus made are very comfortable, even in the coldest weather, and are proof against any thing but a heavy rain; beside which, a change of wind is the only inconvenience they are liable to.

We proceeded again on our journey on the 18th, and, during that and the following day, travelled several miles, without meeting with any thing remarkable. I
 had

had now leisure to observe the beauties of this lake, which was one of the finest I ever saw in America ; though at this season of the year it could not appear to the best advantage. As far as I could judge, it is about twenty leagues in length from north to south, and eight wide from east to west. A number of small islands are scattered about in different parts of it, and give it somewhat the appearance of the lake of Killarny, and other fresh-water lakes in Ireland. These islands have never been settled on ; yet appear to be very fruitful, and must be a most delightful residence in summer, except for the want of fresh water ; which perhaps may be the reason they have never been inhabited. Had the lake been properly frozen, we might have saved ourselves the trouble of travelling several leagues, by crossing over from point to point, and from one island to another : but, this not being the case, we were obliged to travel round the greatest part of the bays on one side of it.

On the 20th we arrived at a place called St. Peter's, where there are four or five
French

French and English families settled. I was here received very politely, and entertained at the house of a Mr. Cavanaugh, a merchant, who was so good as to take my draught for 200 pounds upon my father, though I was a perfect stranger to him. To this harbour vessels of the greatest burthen can come with safety, and a considerable fishery was formerly carried on here, till, on the breaking out of the present war, the American privateers put a stop to it. The force of these privateers, even taken collectively, is but trifling; and it is much to be regretted, that government cannot spare a vessel or two of force to cruize about here, and protect the fisheries; which, together with some other branches of trade, might be carried on with as much vigour, and much more benefit, than before the war. This Mr. Cavanaugh, but a short time before I arrived, was plundered to the amount of three thousand pounds, by two privateers from Boston; who came in at their leisure, and took what they wanted out of his stores. These American privateers have likewise driven all the settlers away
from

from Louisburg, who had also subsisted by the fishery ; and it is somewhat remarkable, that this place, which was, during the two last wars, such a bone of contention between us and the French, has not at the present moment so much as a single inhabitant.

I should have taken a shallop or fishing-boat from this place, and gone to Halifax by sea, but that there was almost a certainty of being taken by some privateer along the coast. This lake St. Peter is but half a mile from the ocean, to which we were to carry our canoe through the woods, and to proceed by water to the gut of Canceau. While the French were in possession of the island, they had formed a design of cutting through this narrow neck of land, and opening a communication on that side between the ocean and the lake, in order to bring in their large ships of war, to lie during the winter in the lake of St. Peter ; for there is a sufficient depth of water in the harbour of St. Peter for the largest ships of the line to ride, though there is not water enough in the
inlet,

inlet, by which the lake communicates with the ocean, to enable them to pass up to the harbour.

After stocking ourselves therefore with as much provisions, and other necessaries, as we had occasion for, we set off on the 22d in our bark canoe, and arrived the same day at a place called by the French, Grand Grave; where there is a family or two of that nation. The wind blowing hard, we were obliged to remain here all night, and on the 23d proceeded along the coast to a settlement called Discouffe, where we were detained another day by some floating ice.

On the 25th we got to a place called Narrashoc; where we were as hospitably entertained as we had been at St. Peter's. I here exchanged the remains of my regimental coat for a brown suit of cloaths, intending to pass for the master of the ship, in case I should happen to be taken by any of the American privateers at Canceau; and as the inhabitants of this place gave me to understand, that the people of Canceau
were

were very much disaffected to government, I took every precaution to disguise the appearance of an officer.

We proceeded in our canoe, on the 26th, to the point of Isle Madame; intending to cross the great passage of Canceau. This passage is called the Gut of Canceau, from an Acadian settlement of that name on the continent; and separates the Island of Cape Breton from Acadia, or, as it is now called by the English, Nova Scotia. The island of Madame lies in the middle of the gut, but rather nearer to Cape Breton than to the main; and the passage to this island is called the small, that from the Island to Canceau, the Great Passage. On making the point of Isle Madame, we found that there was still a great quantity of floating ice in the Great Passage, and, not thinking it prudent to venture in our frail vessel amongst it, we returned to Narra-shoc, in order to procure a small sloop or vessel that could resist the ice.

Having accordingly provided one, we embarked our little canoe in it, and, on the

the 27th, the wind being as favourable as we could wish, got across the passage, which is eight leagues, in three hours. The men, who navigated the vessel to the other side, were very apprehensive of some American privateers lying in the harbour of Canceau, having seen several in the bay two days before. Upon this intelligence, I gave my dispatches and papers to one of the Indians, knowing well, that they never attempt to search or plunder any of these people. We were however so fortunate as to see no privateers on entering the harbour.

On landing at Canceau, I went to the house of a Mr. Rust, who is the principal man at this place, and acts as a justice of the peace under government, for which he receives about 100 *l. per annum*. The inhabitants on the other side, as well as the people who brought us over, having informed me, that this gentleman always supplied the New-England cruizers with every necessary that his stores could afford, I was determined to be very cautious in every thing I said in his presence. Ha-

P

ving

ving paid the person who brought us over the gut, and thanked him for his private intelligence, I was conducted to the house of this Mr. Rust, to whom I passed myself for the captain of the ship. He asked me a number of questions, the tendency of which I could easily perceive; and therefore gave him as evasive answers as possible. I found that he had a brother-in-law, who was a first lieutenant on board a sixteen-gun brig belonging to Boston, which had gone out of the harbour of Canceau the day before.

We remained in this place till three o'clock the next morning, when, being apprehensive of treachery on the part of our pretended friends, we set off without any intimation of it to Mr. Rust. From this gentleman I had purchased a piece of salt pork and about eight pounds of biscuit, which he said was as much as he could spare, and for which I was obliged to pay him at least thrice its value. We were now to proceed in our canoe along the coast to Hallifax, and had reason to fear, that we should be again distressed for provisions.

provisions. However we were so lucky as to find, as we coasted along, plenty of lobsters and other fish, which the Indians caught with prodigious dexterity, killing the flat fish with a pointed pole, and the lobsters with a cloven one. We were ten days going from Canceau to Hallifax, during which interval we did not meet with any settlement, and saw nothing worth mentioning, except a number of piccaroons on various parts of the coast.

The Indians remained for a few days at Hallifax ; when, having received the balance due to them, they took their departure for the island. I was obliged to continue here for two months longer, till an opportunity served of a passage, in the Royal Oak, to New York ; where I delivered my dispatches (in a very ragged condition) to Sir Henry Clinton.

The rest of my fellow sufferers in the shipwreck soon after arrived at Hallifax in a shallop from Spanish River. The captain, conscious of the reception he would meet with, did not think proper to go to
his

his owner at New York, to give an account of the loss of his vessel; but took his passage in a ship from Hallifax to London, and now serves as a pilot on the Thames. The mate was, on account of his good conduct during the whole of our transactions, appointed by a gentleman in Hallifax to the command of a ship bound to the West Indies.



T H E E N D.

